

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 820
By Hood

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Dr. James Walker of
Carbondale, Illinois.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of
the death of Dr. James Walker; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walker was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional
who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous
capacities; and

WHEREAS, Dr. James Walker served with acumen and alacrity as the president of
Southern Illinois University, in which position he earned the respect of his peers, faculty, staff,
and students alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, an Alabama native, Dr. Walker earned a bachelor's degree in biology from
Alabama State University in 1963, a master's degree in special education from Atlanta
University in 1967, and a doctorate in education in 1972 from Pennsylvania State University;
and

WHEREAS, from 1991 to 2000, Dr. James Walker served Middle Tennessee State
University (MTSU) as its eighth president, during which time he increased MTSU's overall
enrollment by 28 percent, including a jump in minority enrollment from 6 percent to
approximately 18 percent; tightened admission standards; increased scholarship money from
\$500,000 to \$4.5 million a year; expanded the Johnny "Red" Floyd Stadium, which paved the
way for MTSU football to move to Division 1-A competition; added an indoor baseball facility
that enabled the Blue Raiders to become one of the best programs in the Sun Belt Conference;
and supervised the erection of several new buildings in the heart of the campus; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walker's successful tenure as president of MTSU resulted in the transformation of MTSU's reputation as a regional university into a national image of excellence in academics and athletics; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walker left MTSU in 2000 to become the first African American president of the two-campus, 35,000-student Southern Illinois University (SIU) system; and

WHEREAS, his significant achievements as the president of SIU include helping the university gain more than \$110 million in capital funding, achieving a 28 percent reduction in system administrative costs, an expansion of the university's governmental internship program, and a 30 percent growth in contributions to the SIU Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Walker leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Dr. James Walker, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Dr. Walker.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.